

Comments from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Public Scoping Meeting; Alamosa, Colorado; Elks Lodge; June 28, 2000

Following is a summary of the questions, comments, and issues raised during the discussion that followed the formal presentation of the purpose and objectives of the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS at the scoping meeting in Alamosa, Colorado. They are presented in the order they were discussed.

- ?*/*Comment.* What is the potential for taking water from Colorado for the Rio Grande silvery minnow?
- ?*/*Comment.* Will groundwater depletion by private organizations be addressed?
- ?*/*Comment.* Who authorized the study and the funding?
- ?*/*Comment.* How can the Compact be kept as a sideboard?
- ?*/*Comment.* Don't see the need for the study to include the Closed Basin.
- ?*/*Comment.* Is the EIS based on the way the system works now or on the proposed changes?
- ?*/*Comment.* How will the alternatives be ranked?
- ?*/*Comment.* Why is the EIS not evaluating economic impacts, only environmental impacts?
- ?*/*Comment.* How much will endangered species concerns drive the study? Isn't the bottom line the impacts to the Rio Grande silvery minnow?
- ?*/*Comment.* Will no private water operations be reviewed?
- ?*/*Comment.* What is the project really looking at? What do you hope to derive from Colorado? I heard that the agencies want to take Colorado water to augment flows for the Rio Grande silvery minnow.
- ?*/*Comment.* What would Rio Grande flows look like if they mimic natural flows? How could this be done and still maintain flood control?
- ?*/*Comment.* Would the project affect the groundwater at the Great Sand Dunes?
- ?*/*Comment.* Is the Rio Grande Reservoir involved?
- ?*/*Comment.* What are the lead agencies hoping to happen regarding the sediment load in the Rio Grande, much of which is contaminated? Do they plan to remove the sediment?
- ?*/*Comment.* Increasing water demands due to increasing population is a large issue. What does this project hope to find out about this issue? The agencies will hear more about this as they go downstream with scoping meetings.
- ?*/*Comment.* Is there a trend toward underground water storage?
- ?*/*Comment.* Will there be consideration of the creation of a conveyance channel to provide water to El Paso?
- ?*/*Comment.* How will the conflicting issues of conveyance efficiency, sustainable riparian systems, and flood control be addressed? How Elephant Butte is operated and how water gets there affects water users in the San Luis valley. Colorado is interested in protecting the Closed Basin Project and the Conejos River basin. It would be difficult to get the buy-in of Colorado people if there are negative impacts to San Luis valley water users.
- ?*/*Comment.* Hope to get a better understanding of the needs of endangered species from this process.
- ?*/*Comment.* What will the entire 5-year effort cost?

?/Comment. To determine what the silvery minnow needs, the study must consider their habitat and the river system in 1850. How can the river system, in its current form, be compatible with the silvery minnow or the southwestern willow flycatcher? Endangered species needs cannot be satisfied with the current river system. The silvery minnow habitat problem could be solved by getting rid of the dams on the river.

?/Comment. If the lead agencies are bound by existing authorities that are clearly spelled out, is it possible to come up with anything different?

?/Comment. What might result from this process?

?/Comment. Will the teams look at average flows or extreme conditions such as drought?

?/Comment. Is the Management Team dedicated full time to this project?